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# BRAIDED RUGS

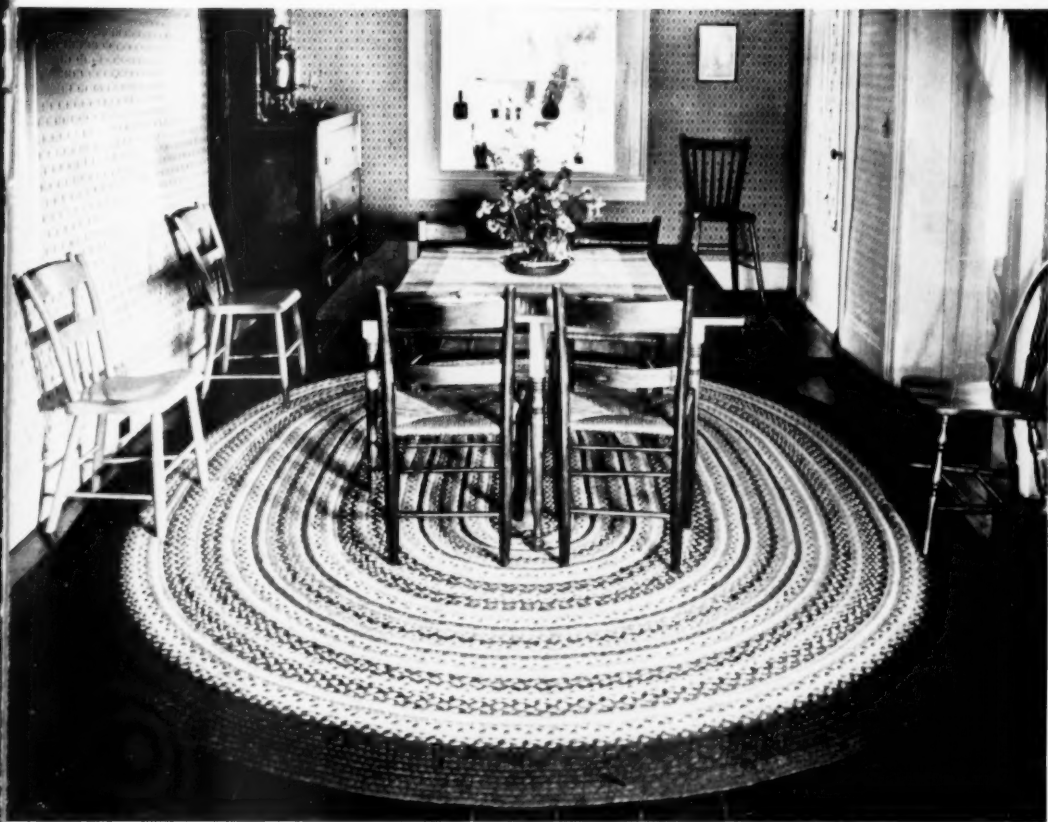
Charlotte Brenan Robinson



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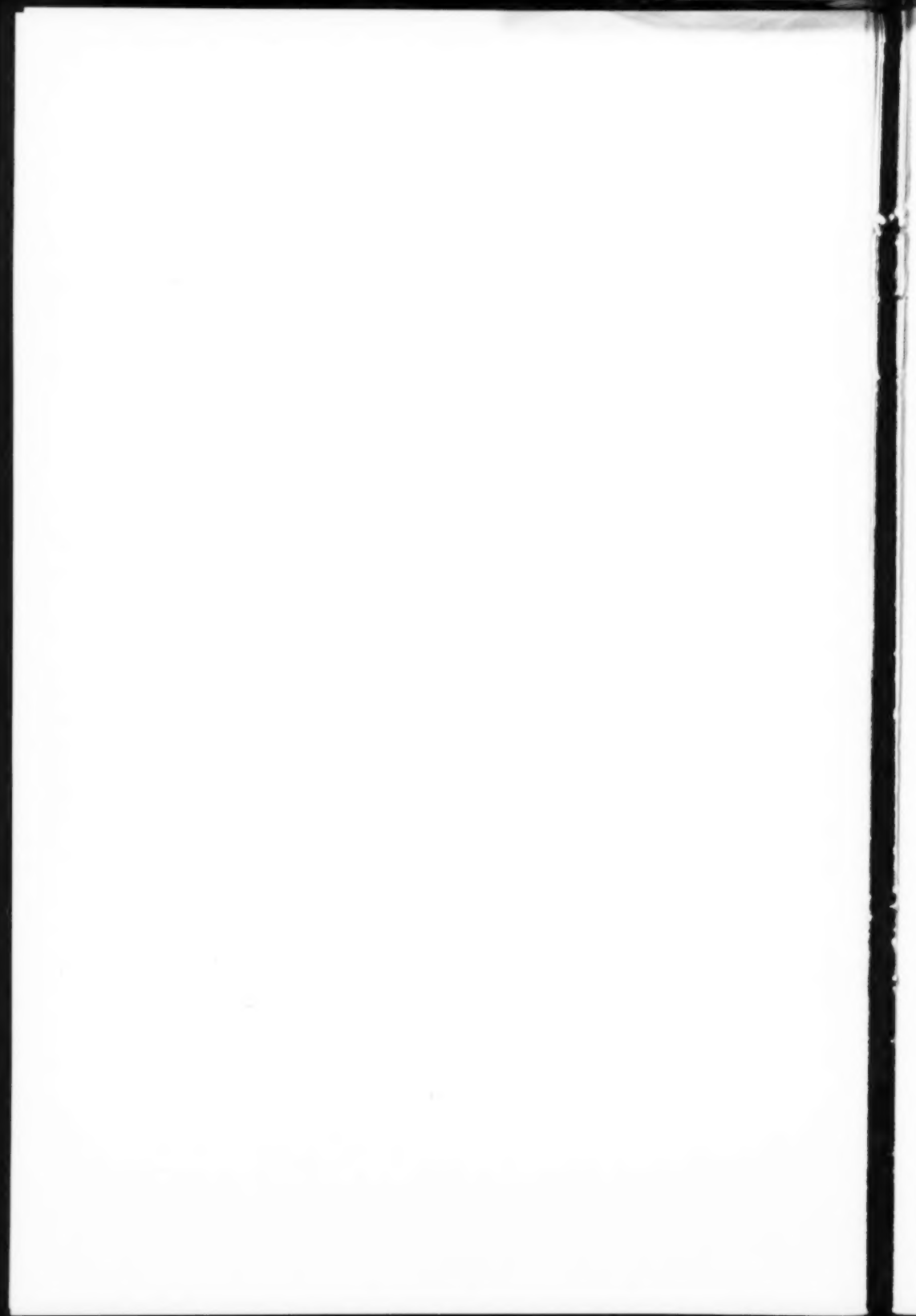


A BRAIDED RUG LOOKS WELL WITH TRADITIONAL FURNITURE ARRANGEMENTS

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# BRAIDED RUGS

CHARLOTTE BRENNAN ROBINSON

**T**HE best braided rugs are soft underfoot but heavy enough to lie flat on the floor without rumpling when stepped upon; they have firm, strong braids, and close, tight stitches that do not leave open places between the braids to catch toes, heels, and furniture legs and cause bad falls; they have colors that repeat and harmonize with those already in the room; and they are made of materials that will stand hard wear. Rugs with these qualities may be had with little or no cash outlay.

## COLORS FOR THE BRAIDED RUG

### Source of color scheme

**T**HE colors for the rug are selected from those in the large areas in the room in which the rug will be used. These areas are walls, draperies, floors, rugs, upholstered furniture, and wood furniture. If the rug repeats three or more of these colors, it will look well in the room.

### Number and proportion of colors

Different shades of one color may be used, but two, three, or more colors make the rug more interesting. With several colors, a large amount of one and smaller amounts of the others are best. A color scheme of two or three colors is easier to handle than is one of many colors. Good proportions are: for two-color schemes, 60 per cent of the dominating color and 40 per cent of the second one; for a three-color scheme, 50 per cent of the dominating color, 35 per cent of another, and 15 per cent of the third.

### The rug must look flat

A braided rug should not only lie flat but should look flat. The way the colors are put together influences this appearance of flatness. Bright colors only or all dull, all pale, or all dark colors in a rug do this. Bright-colored rows of braids alternated with dull-colored ones make a circular, striped effect that usually is not pleasing in a room, and may give the rug a wavy appearance. The same undesirable effect results from alternating very light-colored and very dark-colored groups of braids. Sometimes, however, a color lighter or darker, brighter or duller, than the majority in the rug may be used if only one strand at a time is worked into a braid.

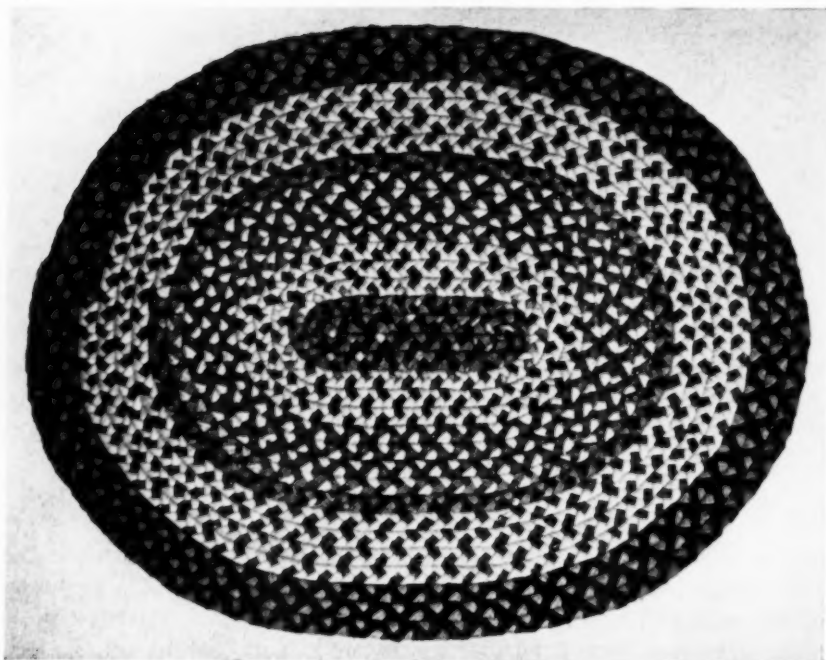


FIGURE 1. AN ALL-OVER-PATTERN RUG WITH A DARK CENTER AND A DARK EDGE  
The color scheme is rose, blue, and brown. Brown shading to tan is the color carried in one or two strands throughout the rug

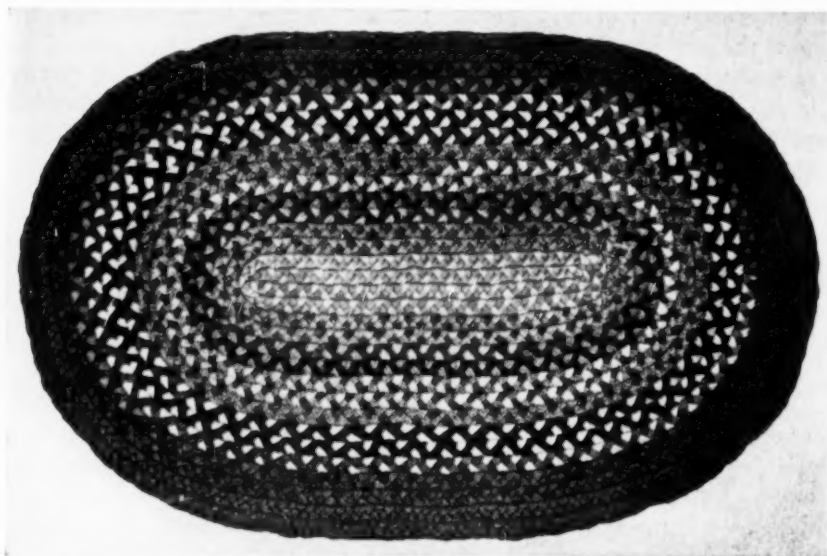


FIGURE 2. AN ALL-OVER-PATTERN RUG WITH A LIGHT CENTER AND A DARK EDGE  
The color scheme is tan, yellow, and blue. Tan shading to brown is the color carried in one or two strands throughout the rug



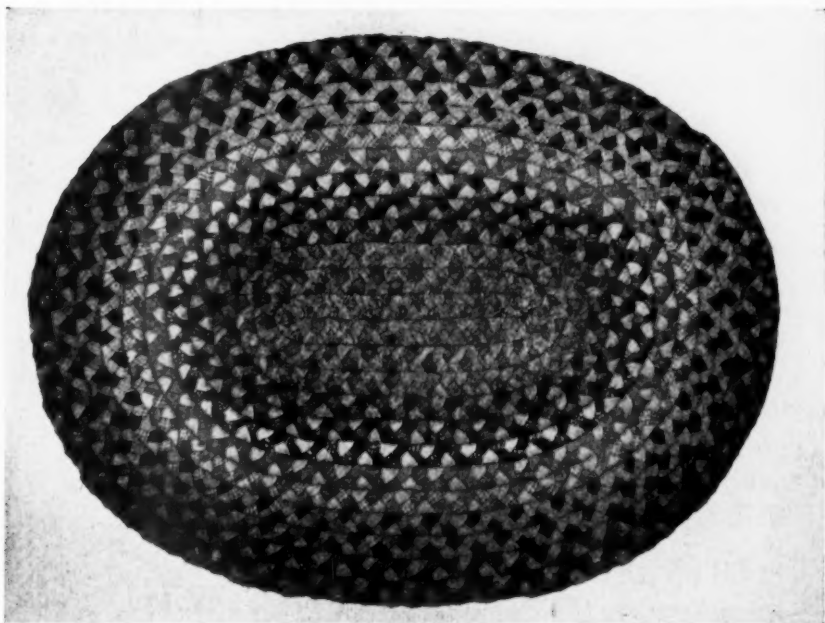


FIGURE 3. AN ALL-OVER-PATTERN RUG WITH A DARK CENTER AND A DARK EDGE

The color scheme is rose, blue, and brown. Brown shading to tan is the color carried in one or two strands of the braid throughout the rug

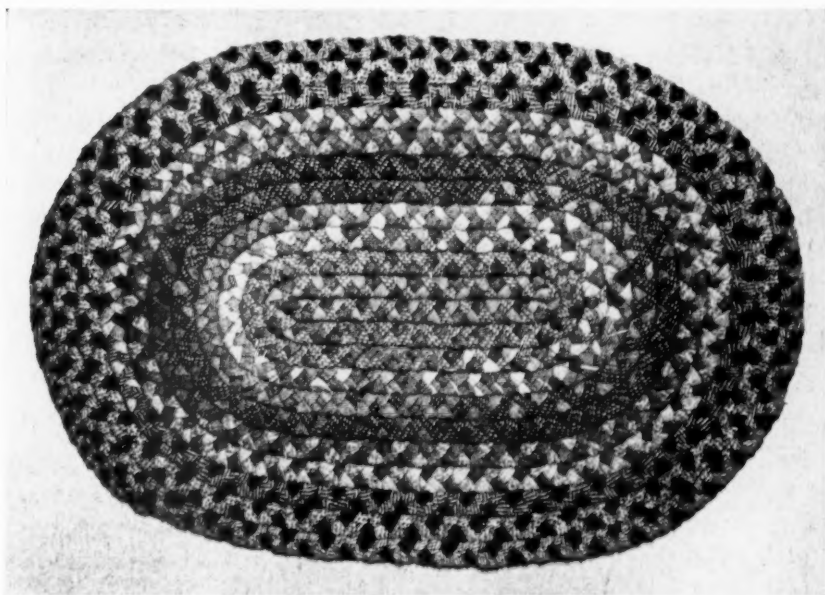


FIGURE 4. AN ALL-OVER-PATTERN RUG WITH A LIGHT CENTER AND A DARK EDGE

The color scheme is tan, yellow, and blue. Tan shading to brown is the color carried in one or two strands of the braid throughout the rug



FIGURE 5. AN ALL-OVER-PATTERN RUG WITH NO STRONG CONTRASTS IN COLOR IN THE GROUPS OF BRAIDS

In this way a sparkle may be produced throughout the rug or in selected areas (figures 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5).

Another aid to the appearance of flatness is the repetition of one strand of the same color in every braid throughout the rug. This color may be of one tone or it may vary a little from light to dark or from dull to bright. The other colors in the braids may vary the same way. It is easier to collect materials of many tones of one or more colors than materials of many different colors.

A third aid to flatness is to use only materials of about the same weight or thickness in one rug.

### SELECTING THE FABRICS

#### Suitable materials

**M**EDIUM-WEIGHT or slightly heavier fabrics make a good braided rug. Thin materials, such as gingham, muslin, chiffon, silk, rayon, and very light-weight wool as found in some shirts, aprons, dresses, underwear, curtains, sheets, and the like, make a thin narrow braid that does

not stand wear and a rug that rumples easily when walked upon. The very heavy materials of cotton or wool, found in heavy blankets, heavy bathrobes, pile fabrics and the like, produce braids that are too thick, too wide, and clumsy.

Wool makes the best braided rug because it is soft and resilient yet heavy enough to lie flat on the floor, wears well, holds its colors, washes well, and is easy to sew.

Cotton makes a good rug but one that is heavier and usually not so soft as a rug of wool. Some cottons fade and are often difficult to wash clean. Cotton is less expensive than wool. It is difficult to get a large needle through cottons that are tough and closely woven. For easy sewing it is wise to select cottons that are soft and pliable, with a slightly open weave; never those that are sleazy, with a loose and very open weave.

New and old materials may be used together in a rug, but both must be either all wool or all cotton. Cotton and wool fabrics used together produce an irregular tension and an uneven rug.

#### **Color variety**

Plain materials, as well as those with stripes, checks, plaids, and floral designs, are needed. Among the figured materials those with an all-over pattern or with a dominating color are best, but all kinds may be used. One should collect large quantities of materials in colors that match or are as nearly as possible like those in the color scheme selected for the rug. All need not match exactly.

#### **Color fastness**

Because most home-dyed materials usually fade, it is best not to use such fabrics in a braided rug. Old materials do not fade at all or very little, and most of the new commercially dyed ones retain their color for a reasonable length of time. Wash new material to find whether the dye runs or not, and to make it softer to work with.

#### **Amount of material**

It often takes a long time to collect braided-rug materials, because the best colors and the right cloth are not always available. It pays to be particular. About one pound of medium-weight wool material is needed for each square foot of rug. Three square yards of medium-weight wool material weighs about one pound.

### Suitable used materials

#### For wool rugs

Medium-weight wool blankets, upholstery materials, or other household textiles. Men's, women's, and children's medium-weight wool clothing such as:

Petticoats	Underwear
Socks and stockings	Cloth suits, coats, pants, skirts
Coat linings	Knitted suits and dresses
Sweaters	Bathing suits
Bathrobes (medium weight)	

#### For cotton rugs

Men's, women's, and children's clothing, such as:

- Heavy cotton knit underwear
- Cotton sweaters
- Overalls
- Corduroy from pants or coats
- Heavy cotton aprons, dresses, shirts

Household textiles such as:

- Feed and seed bags
- Burlap bags
- Bed ticking
- Cretonne from draperies, slip covers, cushion covers
- Heavy sheets and pillow slips
- Tablecloths
- Bedspreads
- Linen dusters

### Suitable new materials

New pieces and remnants from:<sup>1</sup>

- Clothing factories (during cutting season)
- Jobbers
- Cotton or woolen mills
- Mill-end shops

Old clothing and used material from:

- Paper mills (torn or worn "felts")
- Junk dealers
- Rummage sales
- Second-hand clothing stores

<sup>1</sup>Small pieces, good for braided rugs, are sold by the pound for less than the large remnants that are good for the same purpose.



FIGURE 6. EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

## EQUIPMENT

Sharp scissors  
No. 8 linen carpet thread  
No. 20 cotton thread  
Large long-eyed needle  
Pins  
Tape measure  
Thimble  
Pressing cloth  
Ironing board

Iron (to press the bias seams and  
wiry materials)  
Lead pencil  
A few large safety pins  
Small clamp (to hold strips of ma-  
terial to table while braiding)  
Table  
Chair  
Container for holding the rolls

## PREPARING THE FABRIC

FROM old garments only parts strong and unworn enough to be durable are used. All old material should be thoroughly washed and pressed before work is begun; all the seams should be opened or cut off, and buttons, hooks, and other fasteners removed. New material should be shrunk before being braided.

### Making the strips

## Cutting

Cut heavy-weight materials into strips from 2½ to 3¼ inches wide.

Cut medium-weight materials into strips 3 inches wide.

Cut thin materials into strips 6 inches wide or cut them 3 inches wide and later pad them with material of the same color.

Cut the strips from 1 yard to 1½ yards long or less because this length is

the easiest to braid. Cut on the straight of the goods, either crosswise or lengthwise. Some cottons may be torn, but woolens should always be cut.

### Folding

Fold in the raw edges of the 3-inch-wide strip to the center line (figure 7, *A* and *B*). Fold in the raw edges of wiry or stiff material, dampen, and press with a hot iron. Bring the folded sides together, with the raw edges inside (figure 7, *C*).

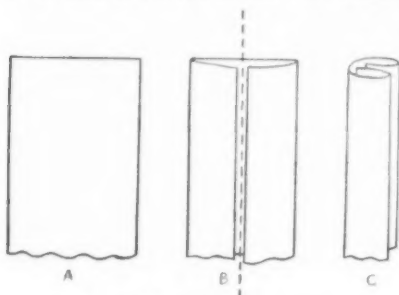


FIGURE 7. FOLDING A STRIP

*A.* Strip cut for folding  
*B.* Sides folded to center  
*C.* Folded sides turned in

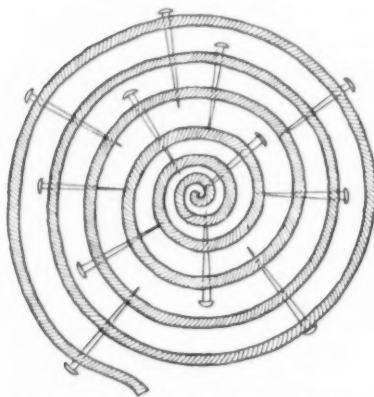


FIGURE 8. ROLLING THE STRIPS

Strips of one color are rolled together to keep them well pressed and neat. The pins, inserted here and there, hold the strips in place

lay them on their sides on heavy paper and dry them in the oven at the lowest heat, with the oven door open, or dry them on a hot radiator. When one side is dry, turn them over.

Fold the 6-inch-wide strips double lengthwise, then fold them again following the directions for folding the 3-inch-wide strips.

All folded strips should be about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch wide. All strips for one rug should be the same width.

### Rolling

Wind strips of one color together in tight rolls, as tape is rolled (figures 6 and 8). Thrust a pin all the way in here and there, at right angles to keep them in place (figure 8).

### Wetting

Have about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of water in a shallow pan or plate and add more water when needed. Dip both sides of the rolls in the water. Another way is to wet your fingers and then to pat both sides of the rolls until they are wet. Then stand the rolls on their edges and let them dry thoroughly before braiding them; or

### Making a three-strand braid

#### Size

The best braids are firm and closely made and are from  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 inch wide. Braids much wider than 1 inch are clumsy and often loose. Those much

narrower may look well in very small rugs, but usually are too fine and thin for a large rug and increase the number of rows sewed to the rug. A loose braid makes a soft, limp rug that stretches badly, rumples easily, and becomes a hazard on the floor.

### Beginning the braid

To begin a braid of two colors, select two different-colored, long, folded strips. Hold one strip with its open side upward and, with a pin, mark off

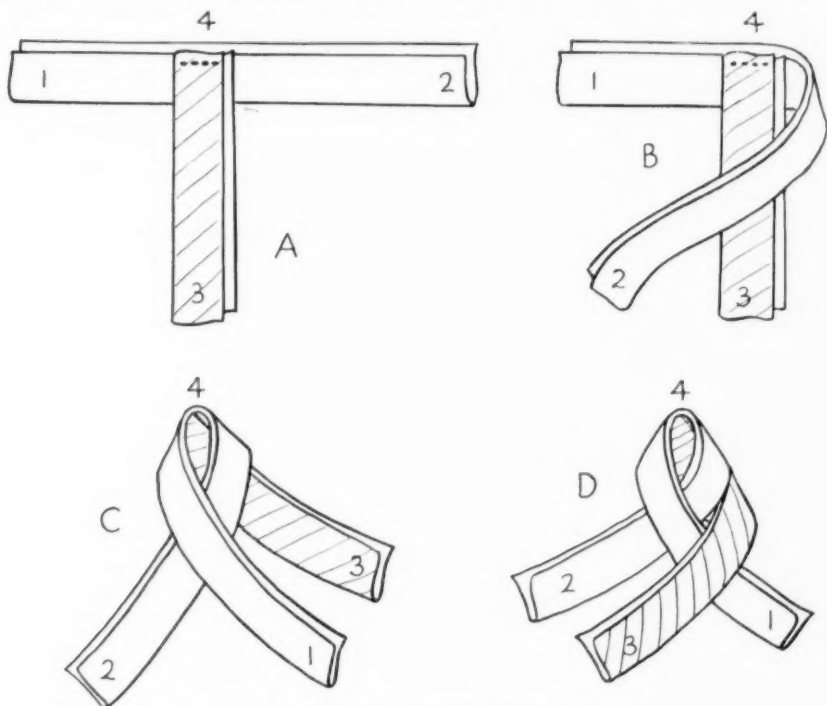


FIGURE 9. BEGINNING CLOSED END OF BRAID

A. For a two-color braid, place the strips at right angles and sew them together at 4. For a three-color braid, join the two strips on the bias at 4; then sew a third strip at 4, at right angles to strip 1-2. Have the open edge of 1-2 up and that of 3-4 to the right.

B. Fold 2 to the left, keeping the open fold up.

C. Fold 1 across 2 and to the right, keeping the open fold up.

D. Fold 3 across 1 and to the left, keeping the open fold up. Pin and fasten this end with a clamp to a table. Continue to fold over and braid as before, beginning with 2.

one-third of the length. At this point sew the end of the second strip at right angles to the first strip, and keep the open side toward the right hand (figure 9, A). To make a braid of three colors, first select two different-colored strips, cut a true bias end on each, and sew these together (figure 14, page 20). At this joining attach a third folded strip of another color at right angles to it, following the directions given for the two-color braid.



Whether using two or three colors, there are now three strands each of a different length. With the right hand, bring end 2 across end 3 (figure 9, *B*); then, with the left hand, fold end 1 across to the right side (figure 9, *C*); then cross 3 over 1 (figure 9, *D*). Continue to work in this way until a braid of desired length is made. To make a firm braid, fasten the beginning of the braid to a strong support, such as a table top or the

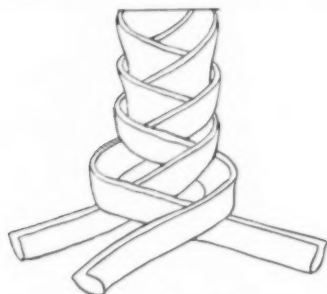


FIGURE 10. A FLAT, TAILORED BRAID

Fold the strips over flat around the edge and across the front of the braid, with the open side of the strands always facing up and the closed side showing on the outside edge of the braid

like, with a screw-type clamp. Pull back a little on each strip as it is braided in. Always fold the open edges of the strip toward the center of the braid, and keep the closed ones on the outside edge of the braid (figure 10). This process makes flat smooth braids with smooth edges, and makes a smooth rug.

If one strip is kept much shorter than the other two, the ends are less likely to tangle.

### Sample braids

Plait several braids each about 1 foot long, making different color combinations

of the colors selected. Have one strand of the same color in all the braids. This color may vary in tone from dark in some braids to light in others or it may be of one tone in all the braids. Try such combinations as:

- 2 strands of one bright color and 1 strand of a neutral color
- 3 strands of different colors
- 2 strands of plain and 1 of figured material
- 2 strands of figured and 1 of plain material
- 3 strands of different figured material

Fasten the ends of each braid securely with a rubber band or safety pin. From these short sample braids select for the rug the three or four kinds that seem to go well together in color and pattern.

### ALL-OVER-PATTERN RUGS

FOR oval or round all-over-pattern rugs, one continuous braid is sewed around a center until the rug is the right size. All braids are of two or three tones or colors. Sometimes braids of one color are used for a few of the outside rows. To conceal the break that shows when a change of color is made (figures 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5), colors more or less alike in tone, which do not vary too greatly from dark to light, are used.



### An oval all-over-pattern rug

#### Planning size and shape

##### Making the paper pattern

A rug planned on a paper pattern (figure 11) is generally easier to make, is better looking, and fits the space it was made for better than does one not so planned. Plain heavy paper, such as wrapping paper, is suitable.

##### Determining the length of center of braid

For an oval rug, the length of the center braid determines the final length and width of the finished rug. To get the length of the center braid, measure the width of the paper pattern and subtract this amount from the length of the pattern. The difference between the two is the length of the center braid (figure 11, A-A). Many makers of braided oval rugs are apt to reduce the length of the rug a few inches either by drawing the center braid up through tight sewing or by too hard pulling of the braids when going around the ends of the rug. Tight sewers then would do better to

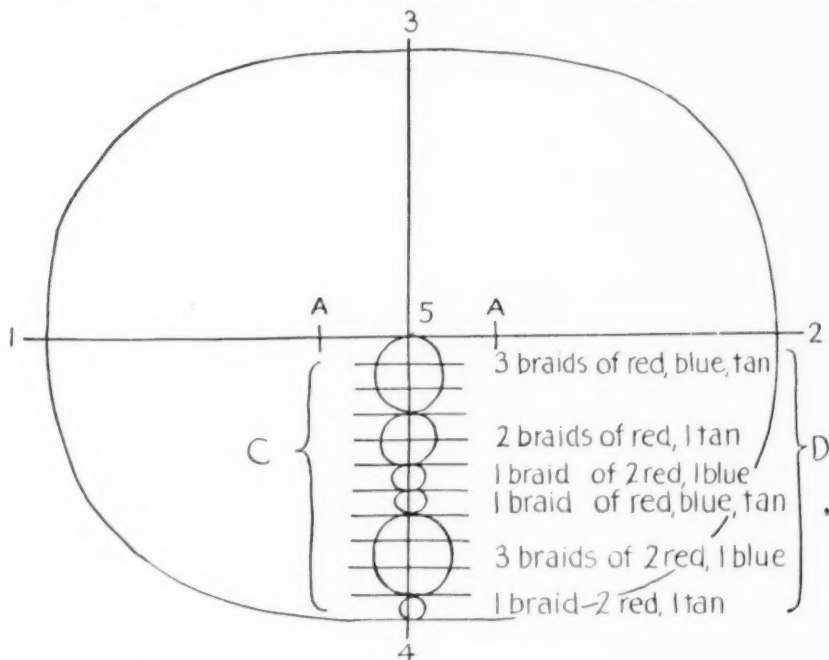


FIGURE 11. PAPER PATTERN AND PLAN FOR GROUPS OF BRAIDS

Cut a paper pattern the size and oval shape that fits the space where the rug will be used. Draw the center lines 1-2 and 3-4. Subtract the length of line 3-4 from that of line 1-2. The remainder A-A will be the length of the center of the rug.

Use the width of a braid to check on line 4-5 the number of rows of braids needed. Divide these rows into groups or single braids and draw penciled lines around them (C). Do not have the same number of braids in all groups. Select the color of braid to be used with each group, and write it down as at D.

increase the original length of the center by as much as  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{8}$  of the length according to the worker's need (figure 12, B-B). But this increased length is used only when the rug center becomes too short as it is sewed.

### Making the braid plan

#### Number of rows of braids needed

Measure the width of the braid. With this for a guide, use a pencil to check from the center line to the edge of the paper pattern the number of rows of braids that will be needed to complete the rug (figure 11, C).

#### Arrangement of braids in groups

On the pattern divide these rows of braids into groups and mark each with a circle (figure 11, C). To avoid the monotony that may come from using an even number of rows in each group, vary the number so that there will be several rows of one kind in one group and more or less than this number in other groups; sometimes one row only of a given kind may be enough.

Rug centers may be large, medium, or small. Borders may be wide or

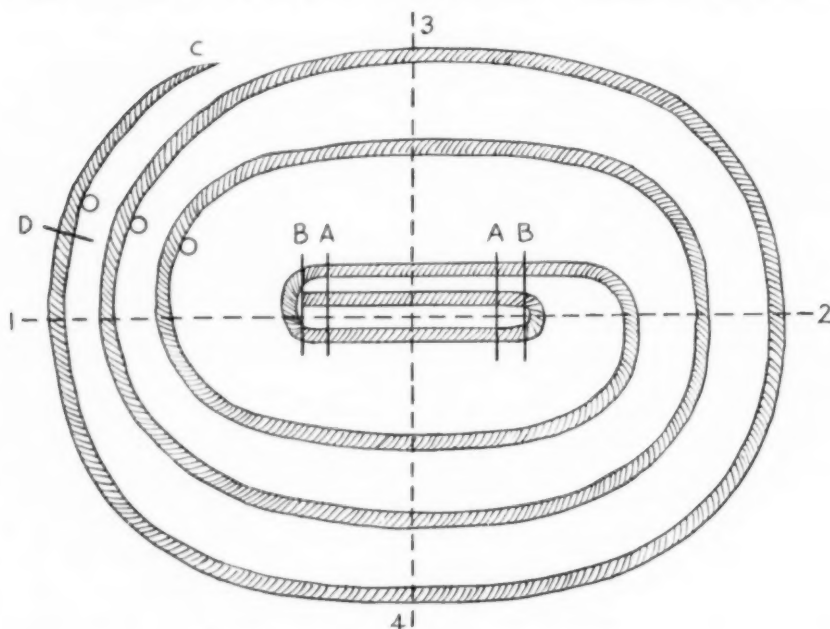


FIGURE 12. SEWING AND FINISHING THE RUG

- A-A. Rea center of rug (page 17)
- B-B. Elongated center that should be the same length as A-A when completed (see pages 17 and 19)
- Left B. Braid-end begins here above the center line, then passes around outside of right B, then outside of left B
- C. Where change of color in the braid takes place
- D. Where tapered braid ends
- E. Tapered ends are cut back to here

narrow. The width of the center and of the border depends on the size and the design of the rug.

#### **Selecting color and pattern of braids for the groups**

From the short sample braids, select the three or four types that look well together in color and pattern. Place one of these braids in each pencil-marked group on the paper plan, arranging them from the center to the edge. For a guide, write on the pattern the number of braids in each group and their colors (figure 11, *D*); then remove the braids.

To hold the color scheme together, repeat some of the braided groups at least twice in the rug—once in an area of several rows and again in another area of one or a few rows. Centers and borders may be light or dark; they may be alike or different in color (figures 1, 2, 3, and 4) or there may be no decided center or border (figure 5).

#### **Sewing the braids together**

Make a braid more than twice as long as the planned center (figure 12, *A-A* or *B-B*). If you can sew without shortening the length of the center, then use the center measurement (*A-A*). Double and sew the braid together, beginning at the looped end (figure 12). Note that the end of the braid begins inside of left *B* but the loop goes outside of right *B*. In joining the braids, use double strands of strong linen carpet thread or wax double strands of heavy cotton thread to keep it from fraying; size-8 thread is good for this. Sew between the braids, using the blind- or slip-stitch so that stitches are invisible on both sides of the rug (figure 13). This plan protects

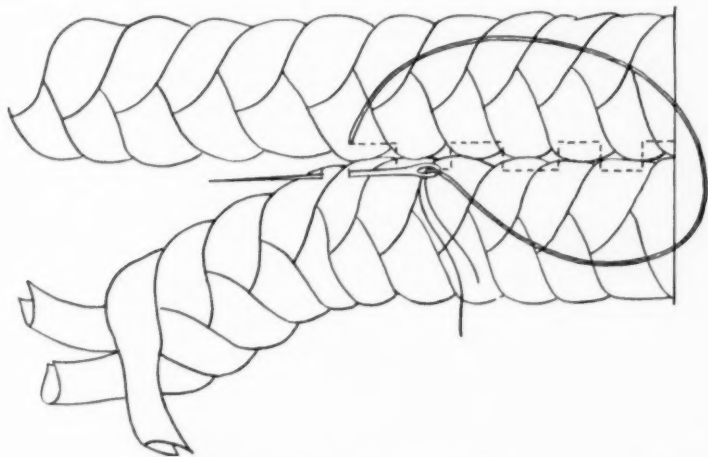


FIGURE 13. SEWING THE BRAIDS TOGETHER

Bend the braid slightly at an angle to the other and sew between them, using the slip-stitch and double strands of linen carpet thread. It is important that the stitch go directly across from one braid to the other and not at an angle.

the stitches from wear and makes both sides of the rug usable. Place the stitches so close together that no holes appear between the braids. Pull the thread tight enough to hold the braids close together but not so tight that the rug is drawn up or cupped. Every few inches double back or take a backstitch to help keep the thread from pulling.

Keep the braid easy but not tight as it is sewed in place, pushing back on it a little as it goes around the curving ends of the rug. If the rug cups, the thread or the braid has been drawn too tight; if the edges of the rug are wavy, too much fullness has been eased in.

At all times the braid that is being sewed to the rug is held next to the worker (figure 13), and the rug must be kept flat on the table to help to keep it from cupping. In the final stages, a very large rug is placed on the floor during the sewing. Increase the length of the braid only 2 feet or so at a time, for a large rug 2 yards or more, and then sew it to the rug.

### Adding new strips to braid

Add a new strip as a strand becomes short. All joinings are made by cutting the ends of both strips on the true bias and sewing or stitching them together with size-20 cotton thread (figure 14). Do not make more than one joining at one place in the braid, for several in one place cause a bulge.

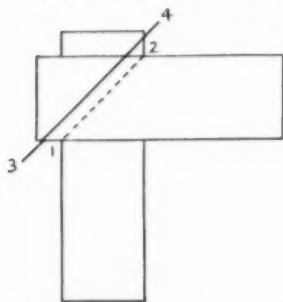


FIGURE 14. JOINING THE STRIP

Cross the ends of the two strips at right angles to each other, with right sides of cloth together.

Sew with back stitch or stitch with machine from point 1 to point 2.

Cut from point 3 to point 4, and press open the seam.

### Changing the color

All changes of color in the braids should be made on a curve of the rug on a line opposite the point where the first braid began (figure 12, O).

### Finishing the rug

#### Ending the braid

The end of the braid where the rug is to be finished should taper (figures 2, 3, and 4), but the length of the tapering depends on the size of the rug. For a 4-by-5-foot or larger rug, the braid should decrease in size for about 2 feet. For smaller rugs, a shorter taper will do.

Let the end of the full-sized braid (figure 12, C) extend beyond the regular stopping place for the change of color in the braid (figure 12, O). Ravel the braid a little back of this point to figure 12, D, and pin the strands together here to keep the braid firm.

## FIGURE 15. ENDING THE ALL-OVER PATTERN BRAID

End the braid so the two tapered strands 1 and 2 lie to the outside of the braid and strand 3 faces in toward the rug. Strand 1 crosses over to the rug and enters between the strands of braid at A. Twist strands 2 and 3 once together and insert strand 3 at B and strand 2 between the folds at C. Pull tight, push the strands to the edge of the braid, and sew securely in place under the folds. Cut off the end of each strip



Fold each unbraided strand on the center line and pin the two sides together on this fold. Cut each strand along the raw edges to a long tapering point (figure 12, C to D). Refold the strands (figure 7, C), sew in the edges and rebraid.

Sew the tapering braid in place in the same way that the full-sized one was sewed. Poke the end of each strip separately into a different opening of the braid beside it (figure 15), and sew securely there. Cut off the end of each strip so all rough ends are concealed.

**Pressing the rug**

Pressing a rug sometimes helps to give it a more finished appearance. Lay a damp cloth over it and press until the rug is dry. Allow the rug to lie flat for several hours before walking on it.

**A round all-over-pattern rug**

Prepare a firm braid with a closed end. Make a draw string of linen thread. Sew it along the inside edge of the braid. Coil the closed end of this braid into a tight, round, flat center, and sew it securely. To prevent cup-



FIGURE 16. A BRAIDED RUG THAT IS ROOM-SIZE OR LARGE ENOUGH TO BE IN SCALE WITH FURNITURE GROUPS IS OFTEN MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN SMALLER SIZES

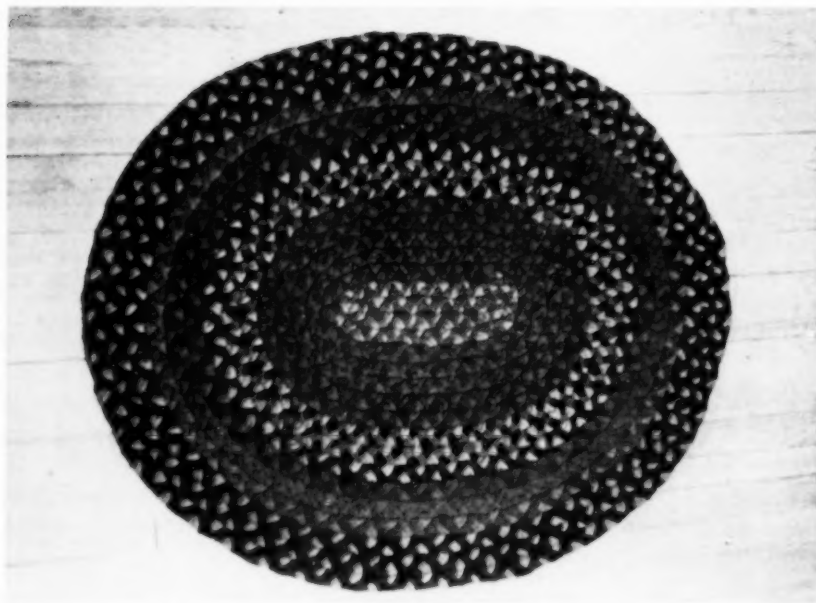


FIGURE 17. A BRAIDED RUG SHOWING A PATTERN OF CONTRASTING COLORS AND VALUES

ping at the center, "full on" or push backward on the inside edges of the first few rows of the braid, easing in the fullness as it is sewed in place. Never use a cupped center. Pressing does not remove cupping permanently. After a flat center of several rows has been obtained, gradually push back less on the braid and continue sewing around and around until the rug is finished.

The same directions as those used for planning, designing, and finishing an all-over-design oval rug are followed in making a round rug.

#### HIT-OR-MISS PATTERN RUGS

**H**IT-OR-MISS pattern rugs are made in the same way that the all-over-pattern rugs are made, except that the colors are put in differently. This rug is a little simpler to make, usually is less interesting in appearance than the other rugs, but looks well in places where an indefinite pattern is needed on the floor.

Follow the directions for selecting the colors for the all-over-pattern rugs. Instead of having the same colors throughout each row and ending each at a particular spot, add a different color each time a new strip is sewed to the braid. See that each color is well spotted over the entire rug and is not in patches chiefly at one end or at one side.

### STRIPED RUGS

**I**N a striped rug each braid is completed and sewed to the rug and the ends are joined before the next row is begun (figure 18). The joining of the ends on each row should be as invisible as possible. This rug may be made of braids of mixed colors, or braids of different solid colors, or braids of mixed and of solid colors.

#### An oval striped rug

The selection and preparation of materials, the planning, and the sewing of this rug are the same as for the all-over-pattern braided rugs.

#### The color scheme

This rug may be made more striking in design and color than ones with the all-over or the hit-or-miss pattern because plain-colored and mixed-colored braids may be used together in a rug. It is best not to have too great a contrast between the plain and figured braids or to have rows of strong

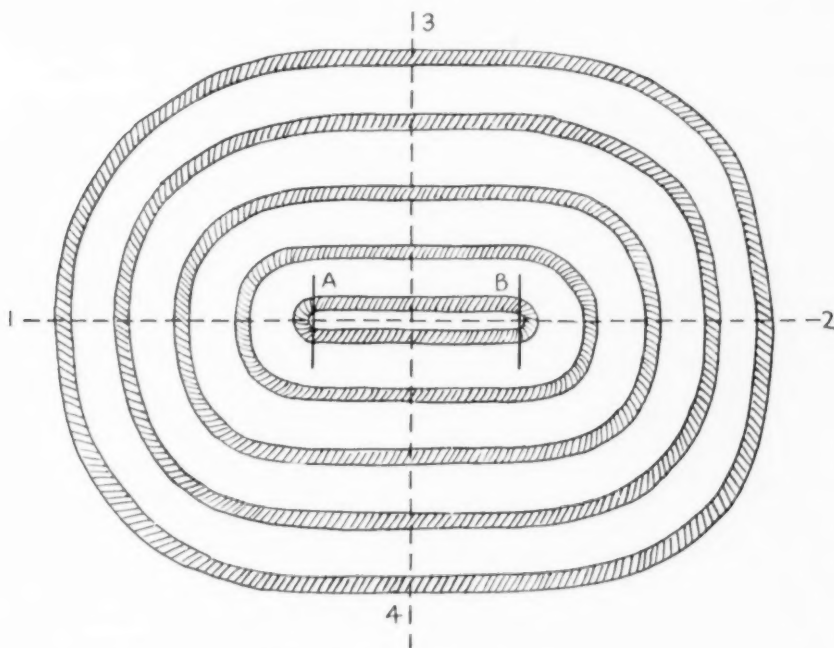


FIGURE 18. THE STRIPED RUG

Each row of braid forms a complete circle and the joining of the ends does not show. Therefore, it is possible to use plain-colored braids as well as mixed ones in the same rug.  
A-B indicates the length of the center of the rug



colors or of black in contrast to light and pale colors, for either has a target effect, and such a strong circular movement in the rug usually is unsatisfactory. All braids of mixed colors greatly soften this strong effect.

Not more than three colors that harmonize or contrast make a pleasing color scheme that is easy to work out. The braids at the center and those on the outside edge of the rug may be: light, medium, or dark in color; of plain or mixed colors; and narrow or wide. The color throughout the rug may graduate from light to dark or the reverse. Each group of three or more rows may graduate from light to dark. A repetition of color throughout the rug is good. Trial braids should be placed on the paper plan as for the all-over-pattern rug (page 18). Further color suggestions are given on pages 7 to 10 and on page 16.

### **Making the braids**

Pin the ends of the strips together before beginning to braid. Make the braids firm and each of the required length plus 8 inches, before sewing them to the rug. Pin together the loose strands at the finished end to keep the braid firm throughout.

### **Sewing the braid**

For this rug all braids must end at different places on the rug, not opposite one spot in the center as for the all-over-pattern rug with the continuous braid. This method makes a stronger rug.

All the braids must run in one direction with the same side up.

Pin the braid to the rug with large safety pins. At the stopping point let the extra 4 inches at each end remain free. This method of temporarily securing the braid to the rug permits the proper adjustment of the tension of the braid before sewing it to the rug, and helps to prevent cupping or rippling. Keeping the rug flat on a large table or on the floor is helpful. Sew the braid in place as described for the all-over-pattern rug (figure 13 and page 19). Then pin on the next braid and continue as before.

### **Ending the braid**

Of the several ways to join the ends of this braid, two of the best are the simple method and the complex method.

#### **Simple method**

With the simple method, the rug is strong but inclined to be bumpy where the ends of the braids join, and the seams show on the right side. Only one side of the rug can be used as the top side.

Turn the beginning and the final projecting 4-inch braided ends upward at right angles to the underside of the rug (figure 19). Pin them together



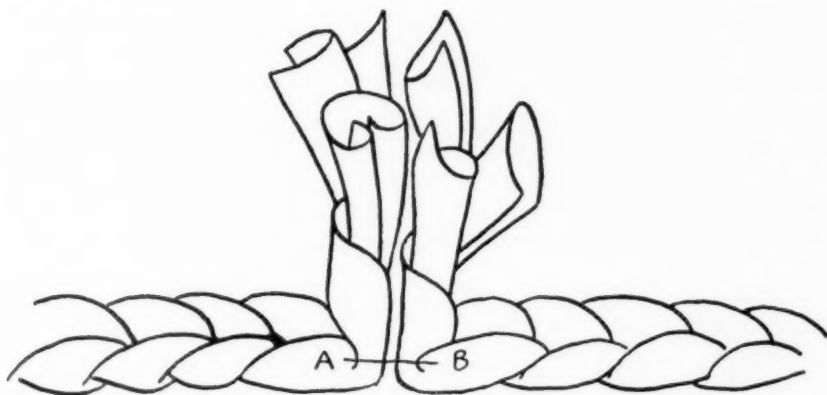


FIGURE 19. STRIPED-RUG BRAID ENDING—SIMPLE METHOD

Bend the two ends of the braid upward at right angles. Hold them firmly together, and sew together at the bend A-B. Use two strands of No. 20 cotton thread.

so that the braid fits neatly to the rug. With double strands of cotton thread sew the ends together in a seam so that they will not pull apart (figure 19 A-B).

Cut off the projecting ends about 1 inch from the seam. Cut out the underside of the ends to eliminate bulk. Fold under both sides of all strips to prevent raw edges. Press the seam open and sew the ends down on the braid. Complete the sewing of the braid to the rug.

#### Complex method

With the complex method, the rug is strong and smooth, and no seams show where the braids join at the ends. Either side of the rug may be used as the top side.

Lap the final 4-inch end over the beginning 4-inch end so that the strips of the upper one lie over those of the lower (figure 20). Fasten

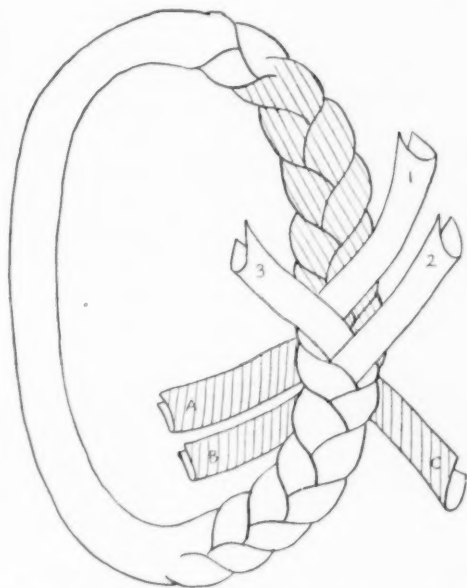


FIGURE 20. STRIPED-RUG BRAID ENDING—COMPLEX METHOD

Pass strands 1, 2, and 3 over and back of strands under them.  
Turn the braid over.

them together with a pin at a point midway between both ends of the overlapping braid.

Unbraid the strips of the end lying on top so that two strips project on one side of the braid and one on the other and each strip lies over the one directly under it in the other end of the braid (figure 20). Make the ends of these strips pointed. Cut out some of the under side of the strips where they pass over the braid and under the crossing strips. Keep all raw edges turned under. This makes the joined ends about the same thickness as the rest of the braid.

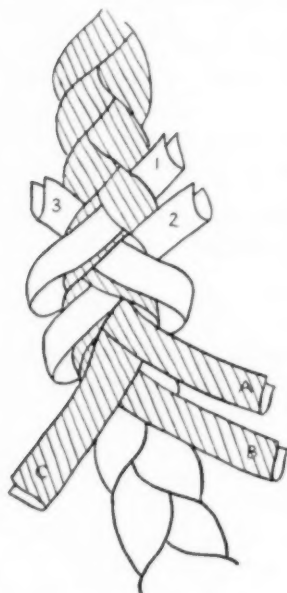


FIGURE 21. STRIPED-RUG BRAID ENDING

Insert strands 1, 2, and 3 under the crossing folds; pull them tight; and sew in place under the crossing strand. Cut off the projecting ends

On the two-strip side of the top end, fold strip 1 under the lower braid end following the one below it, and pull it under the first crossing strip (figure 21). Take strip 2 and pass it below and then under the immediate crossing strip (figure 21). Fold the single strip 3 under the lower braid end and draw it under that crossing strip (figure 21). Pull the strips so their tension is the same as that in the rest of the braid. Sew them firmly in place under the crossing folds and cut off the ends so they do not show.

Unpin and unbraid the lower end of the braid and bring each strip, A, B, and C, over the top of the upper end, each following directions for 1, 2, and 3 (figure 21). Adjust the tension and sew the ends in place as described. Sew this part of the braid to the rug. Continue with the other braids until the rug is completed.

### A round striped rug

Round striped rugs are made as are the oval ones, but a flat round center is difficult to obtain.

### BRAIDS WITH FOUR OR MORE STRANDS

THE number of strands in a braid may be anywhere from 3 to 12, 15, or more. The three-strand braid is the best for a braided rug because it is easier to make and is more pliable than is one with more strands; those made from four or more strands are both difficult to braid and to bend in circles or ovals. They are best in rectangular rugs.

For a many-stranded braid, lay the strips flat side by side with the open edges all facing in the same direction. Keeping them in this position, sew the beginning end of each strip to the one beside it, or sew them all to a piece of tape.

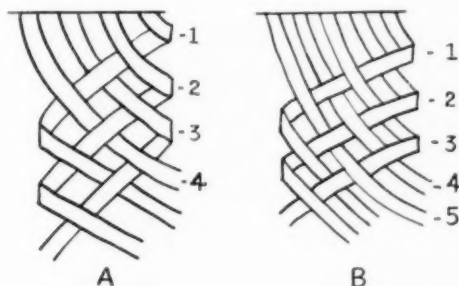


FIGURE 22. BRAIDS WITH FOUR (A) OR MORE (B) STRANDS

When braiding with an *even* number of strands, fold *back 1* on the right under 2, over 3, and under 4, and so on across to the left. Fold *forward* the last strand on the left across the one that has just come from the right. Hold these strands firmly in place in the left hand. Then weave the next right one back and across to the left in the same way, and so proceed as before until the braid is finished (figure 22, A).

When braiding an *uneven* number of strands fold the right strand *forward* and over 2, under 3, and so across to the left. Then fold *forward* the the last strand on the left and lay it across the one that has just come from the right (figure 22, B). Continue this way with the other strands.

### CORN-HUSK RUGS

**C**ORN-HUSK rugs are easily made, and are tough and inexpensive; they have either smooth or rough surfaces. The smooth ones are used on the floor inside the house, or as cushions for porch or lawn; the rough, coarse ones are for use at the kitchen door or at the front door to keep mud and sand from being tracked into the house.

#### Selection and preparation of materials

Strong, pliable twine, a sacking needle or a long, strong darning needle, sharp scissors, and a bushel or more of corn husks are needed. Dry, brittle

husks may be made pliable by dampening them just before they are braided. Very wet husks are likely to mildew before they dry.

### A smooth corn-husk rug

#### Beginning the braid

Use husks from field corn, because they are strong and a good color. Use any husks but green-colored ones. Discard the coarse outside ones and use the inner soft, pliable husks. Keep them uniform in width by using those about 2 inches in width and cutting wider ones down to about the same width. If one end of the husk is coarse and thick, cut off that end. Select three of the husks, fold them lengthwise (figure 23, A), lay them together, and tie them through the middle with a wrapping cord (figure 23, B). Bend them double at the tied place and divide the six ends into three groups of two husks each (figure 23, C) and begin to braid using two husks as one strand.



FIGURE 23. BEGINNING THE BRAID FOR A SMOOTH CORN-HUSK RUG

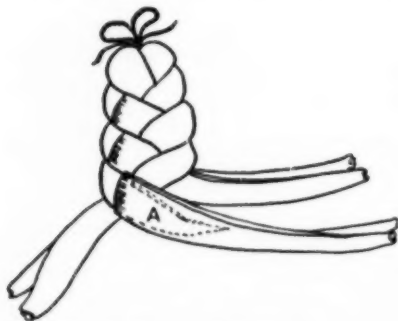


FIGURE 24. ADDING NEW HUSKS

#### Adding new husks

Two new husks are added to the left-hand strands each time they are braided in. This is done by folding the new husks over the short ends so they overlap them for about 2 inches (figure 24, A).

The braid is made in one continuous piece, the final end is tapered and tied to keep it from unbraiding.

#### Sewing the rug

The rug may be sewed together with the braids flat as for fabric rugs, or they may stand upright on their edges.

When the braid is used flat to make a round or oval rug, follow the plan for making centers and sewing braids together as for the

fabric rugs (figure 13). Make the slip-stitches at least 1 inch apart, or use the overcast stitch on the underside to join the edges of the braids. To finish the rug, sew the tapered final end in place securely, making it as inconspicuous as possible.

A rug with the braid standing on edge is made in the same way. The long slip-stitch is always used between the braids to sew them together.

### **A rough corn-husk rug**

Use moderately large outside or inside field-corn husks that are free from mildew. Dampen and crush them, but do not fold them as for the smooth rug. If they are thoroughly wet more than twice, they may become too brittle for use.

#### **Beginning the braid**

Hold the large ends of two husks upright and cross them right over left about 1 inch down (figure 25, A, 1, 2). Place the large end of a third husk perpendicularly behind the crossed ends, projecting it about 2 inches above the cross (figure 25, A, 3). Bend this end forward between the crossed ends, and fold it down. Bring the left strand firmly over it (figure 25, B, 1).

#### **Adding new husks**

A new husk is added as each left-hand husk is braided. After folding the left-hand husk (1) across then lay the new husk (4) on top of it (1) with the large end projecting  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches beyond the braid. Fold the right strand (2) across it and hold the two of them firmly in place (figure 25, C). Now fold strand 3 across and lay a new husk on top of it, letting the new husk project  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches beyond the braid. Weave the right husk across to hold them. Continue working in this way braiding in the two ends as one strand. Make a continuous braid of several feet. A 30-foot braid makes a round rug about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet across. Tie the end of the braid securely before beginning to sew it into a rug.

#### **Sewing the rug**

Make an oval or round center and sew the braids together flat following the directions for making a fabric rug. Sew together with the slip-stitches 1 inch or more apart. The projecting ends of the husks are on the top of the finished rug. The smooth side of the rug is kept upward so the sewing can be done from this side.

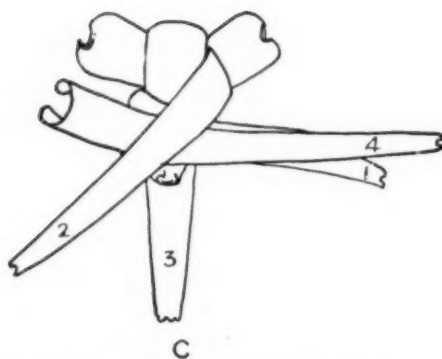
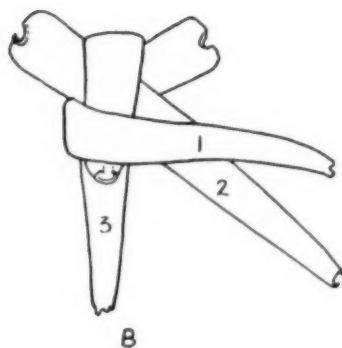
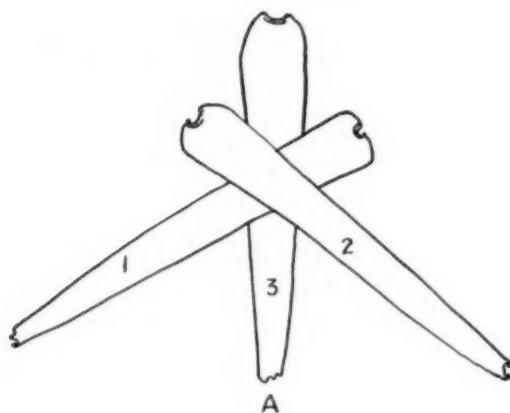
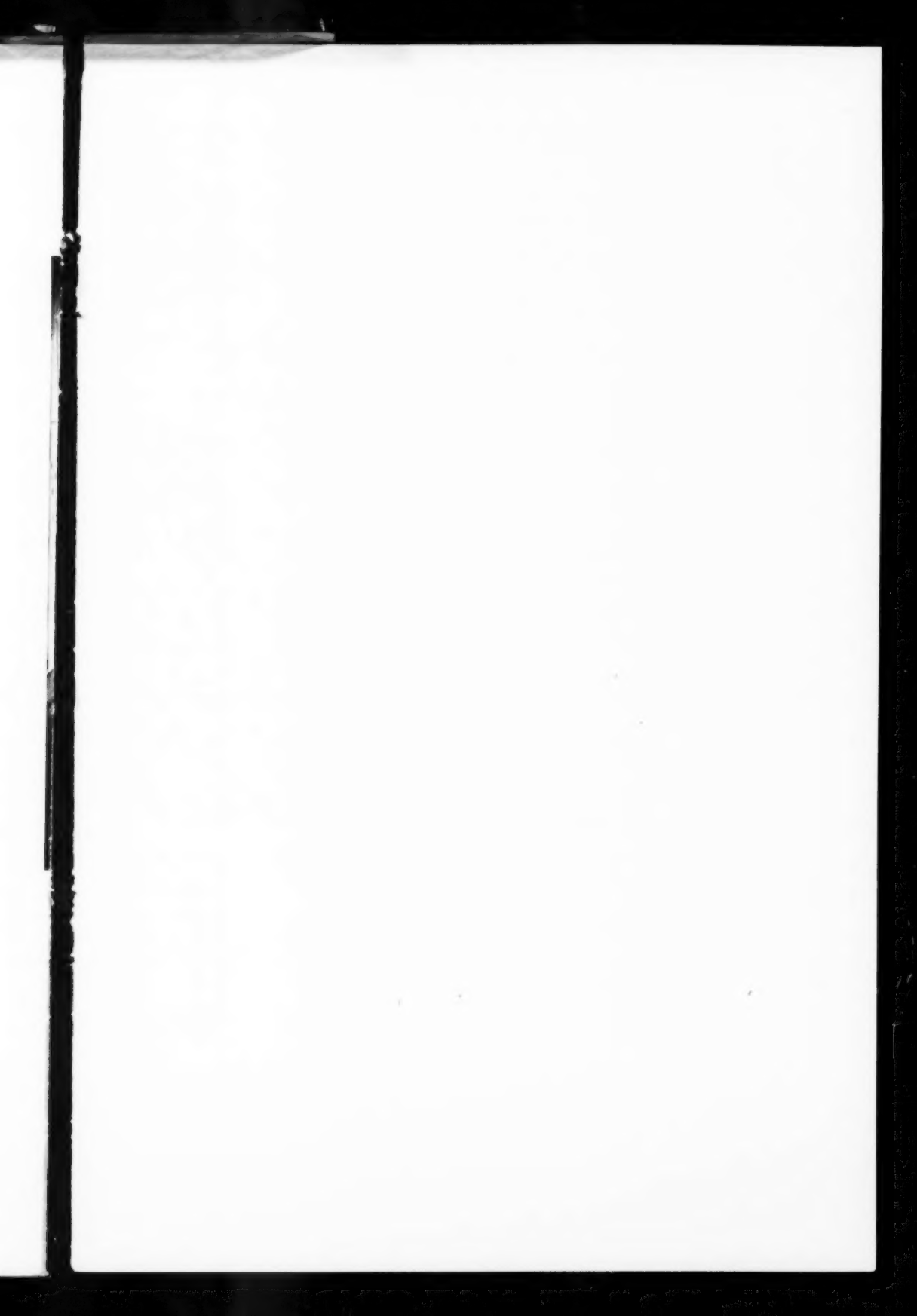


FIGURE 25. BEGINNING THE BRAID FOR A  
ROUGH CORN-HUSK RUG



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